

REMARKS

Claims 1, 7-18, 22, and 23 were pending. Claims 1, 7-9, and 22 stand allowed and claims 10-18 and 23 stand rejected. By virtue of this response, claims 10-18 and 23 are cancelled. Accordingly, all pending claims, i.e., 1, 7-9, and 22, now stand allowed.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 10-14, 16-18, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takano (U.S. Patent No. 7,100,173) in view of Wanger (U.S. Patent No. 5,043,962) and Yoshida (U.S. Patent No. 5,886,853). Further, claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Takano (U.S. Patent No. 7,100,173) in view of Wanger (U.S. Patent No. 5,043,962) as applied to claim 10, and further in view of Hanaki (U.S. Patent No. 6,483,204).

Claims 10-18 and 23 are cancelled herein, thereby rendering the rejections moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 249212023500. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

By Electronic Signature /Christopher B. Eide/
Christopher B. Eide

Registration No.: 48,375
MORRISON & FOERSTER LLP
755 Page Mill Road
Palo Alto, California 94304-1018
(650) 813-5720